

# **Midtown North Neighborhood Plan**

May, 2009

Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning & Development

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction .....	1
	Description of Project .....	1
	Study Area Location and Boundaries .....	1
	Historical Overview of the Midtown North Neighborhood.....	2
II.	Goals, Objectives and Issues.....	5
	Goals and Objectives .....	5
	Identification of Critical issues and Opportunities .....	6
III.	Conditions and Trends .....	9
	Demographic Analysis.....	9
	A. Population Trends and Conditions.....	9
	B. Housing Trends.....	12
	C. Economic Trends and Conditions.....	13
	Land Use Analysis .....	15
	A. Existing Zoning.....	15
	B. Land Use Survey.....	16
	C. Survey of Existing Building Conditions and Uses .....	17
IV.	Problem Identification and Analysis.....	18
	Safety and Environment.....	18
	A. Pedestrian Safety.....	18
	B. Traffic Circulation .....	19
	C. Environmental Hazards.....	19
	D. Illegal Activity .....	20
	Economic Stability.....	21
	Housing .....	21
V.	Plan Recommendation and Implementation .....	22

## List of Tables

Table 1 Total Population.....	9
Table 2 Racial Composition.....	11
Table 3 Age of Population .....	11
Table 4 Median Age.....	12
Table 5 Persons per Household.....	12
Table 6 Educational Attainment .....	12
Table 7 Housing Occupancy .....	13
Table 8 Age of Housing Stock.....	13
Table 9 Median Income .....	14
Table 10 Families Living in Poverty .....	14
Table 11 Labor Force.....	15
Table 12 Existing Land Use.....	16
Table 13 Condition of Buildings.....	17
Table 14 Condition of Lots .....	17
Table 15 Vehicles per Household.....	18

## List of Maps

Map 1 Study Area .....	4
Map 2 Census Tracts.....	10

## ***I. INTRODUCTION***

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

In the spring of 2007, the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development combined their efforts with Rhodes College and Shasta Central in developing a neighborhood plan. Rhodes College has been actively involved in building a partnership with the Hollywood/Springdale Neighborhood to help revitalize a neighborhood that has shown significant signs of neglect and blight. The Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development (OPD) was approached by Rhodes College to produce a neighborhood plan for the area. In the spring of 2007, OPD staff met with Dr. Kirby of Rhodes College and Dorothy Cox, Director of Shasta Central to discuss an outline for the public process and a timeframe of events that would follow.

A partnership between Rhodes College and OPD allowed for the sharing of resources throughout the project and included a land use survey that was conducted by Rhodes College students that began in the fall of 2005 and continued throughout 2007. The survey also identified the condition of structures and included an environmental assessment of individual lots. OPD mapped the land use, condition of structures and lots based on the data collected by Rhodes College Students. A coordinating committee was formed that was comprised of neighborhood leaders and stakeholders. At the first coordinating committee meeting OPD staff was asked if it was possible to expand the neighborhood boundaries to the north to include the Hyde Park neighborhood, a small portion

to the west that included a residential area near Bingham Street, and a large area that would include the Vollintine-Evergreen neighborhood and go as far east as Watkins Street. The reasoning behind the expansion was so that the plan would be more inclusive and build on partnerships with adjacent neighborhoods. Rhodes College agreed to expand their land use survey to include the Hyde Park neighborhood and the small residential neighborhood near Bingham Street. For the purpose of this study, it was agreed that select demographic information would be collected for the expanded area but the main focus of the study would still be the original boundaries of the Hollywood/Springdale study area with a slight expansion to include the Hyde Park neighborhood.

A series of public meetings was held beginning in March 2007 and continued throughout the summer. The first meeting focused on identifying the neighborhoods strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The second meeting helped to establish goals and objectives for the neighborhood plan. A series of task force meetings were held to address the issues and develop solutions or implementation strategies to achieve the goals set forth by the neighborhood. Various governmental departments were invited to the task force meetings to help facilitate the meetings. This planning document is a result of the dedication and hard work of the community participants as compiled by the OPD staff.

### **STUDY AREA LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES**

The Midtown North Neighborhood Study Area is bounded by Jackson Street to the south; Bingham and Fairfax Streets to the east; Troy, Heard and Belmont Streets to the north; and University Street and Short Street to the west (see Map 1). The

area is located in the North Memphis Planning District and is approximately 5 miles northeast of Downtown. Physical boundaries separate the study area from other neighborhoods in the city. The Wolf River separates the Midtown North neighborhood from the Frayser community to the north. Heavy industrial uses separate the neighborhood from the Douglass community to the east. The areas to the west and south of the study are well connected to neighborhoods in the midtown section of the city. The Mid-Town North Community Association that serves the Midtown North neighborhood includes a larger area to the west of the study area and is shown in Map 1.

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MIDTOWN NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD**

The Hollywood/Hyde Park Springdale Neighborhood was developed in the early to mid 1900's. At the time, workforce housing was built in close proximity to major employment centers. Industrial land uses were located along major transportation routes that included the railroad. Three separate rail lines traverse through the neighborhood. According to the 1927 Sanborn Map, industrial development had occurred along Chelsea along and an area off of Hollywood along the Union Rail Road. Major industrial employers at the time included the King Haase Furniture Company at the corner of Chelsea and May Streets and the Sondheimer Lumber Company and G.M. Gooch Lumber Co. on the site where Buckman Laboratories and Gooch Park are now located. Other major industrial employers in the neighborhood included the Home Refining Co. (crude oil refiners), Tupelo Fertilizer, Hartwell Bro's., and Hollywood Concrete Pipe Co. that were located east of

Hollywood and south of Matthews along the Union Railroad. Perhaps the biggest employers serving the neighborhood included the Ford Motor Company and chemical companies Vesicol, Plough, and HUMCO all located just east of the Hollywood neighborhood off Warford Street.

During the environmental movement that took place beginning in the late 1960's, these chemical companies that were once welcome to the neighborhood were now seen as an environmental hazard and health risk. The contamination of Cypress Creek and the toxic emissions that are released daily by the industrial facilities has raised health concerns by residents in the neighborhood.

Residential development consisted mostly of single family dwelling units. Some of the development patterns reflect narrow residential lots that were developed prior to zoning. These narrow lots are not in conformance with today's zoning laws and provide challenges to redevelop some of the vacant and abandoned properties that now exist. There are also small businesses and shops have been integrated into the residential areas and can be seen along various streets where small businesses have been abandoned and are no longer in conformance as a commercial property. Industrial uses abut residential property with no existing buffer. Today's zoning laws discourage the placement of industrial buildings adjacent to residential neighborhoods without providing a buffer of a less intensive use such as a business or commercial use.

Retail areas include strip development along the major roads of Jackson, Hollywood and Chelsea Street. These retail areas provide off street parking in front of or to the side of businesses and shops. Most of the retail areas lack sufficient landscaping

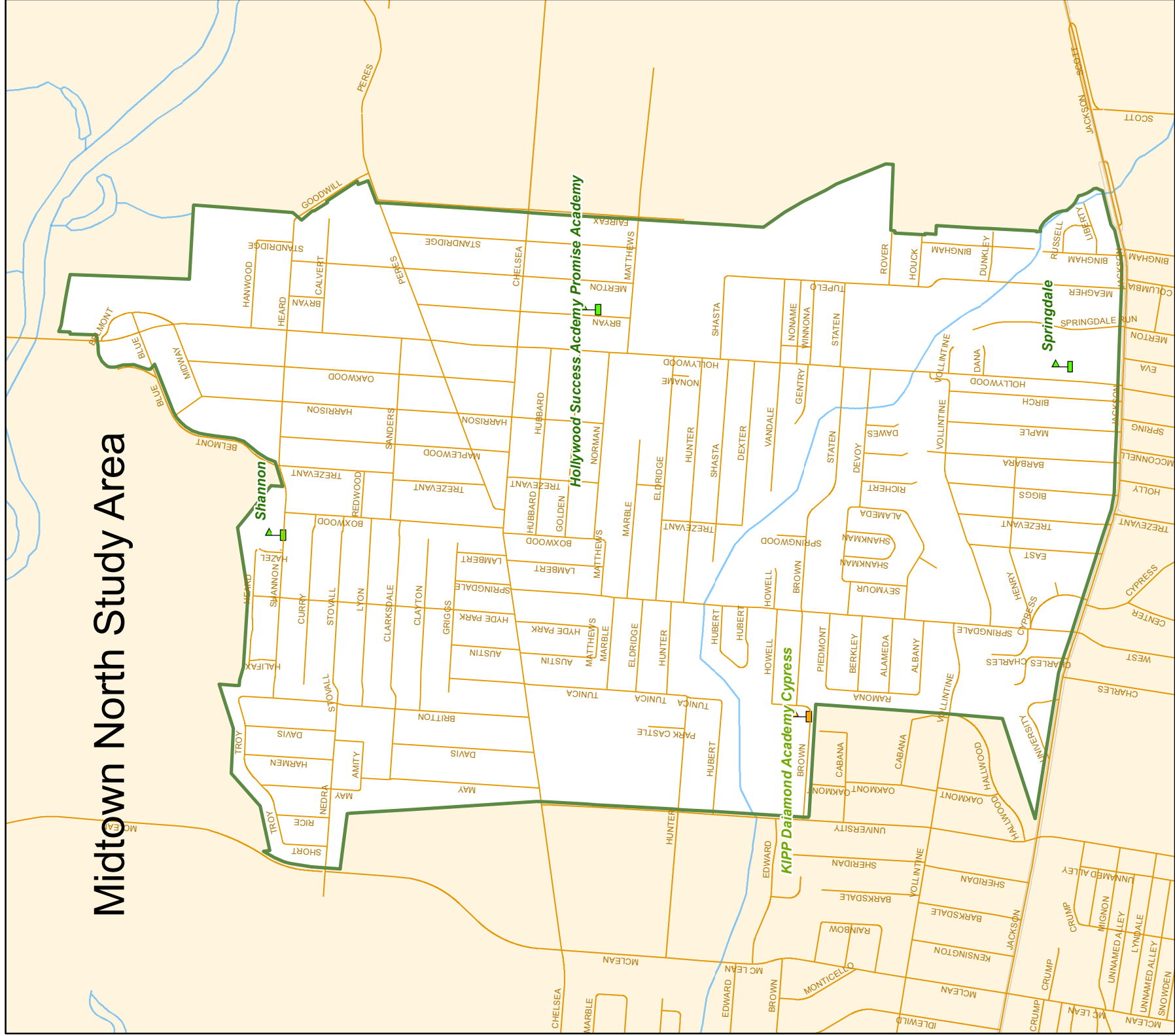
with the exception of infill commercial development that has taken place recently. Most of the commercial activity now occurs along N. Hollywood Street and intensifies as it reaches the Chelsea intersection.

The Hyde Park area was developed primarily as an African-American neighborhood with Gooch Park and Shannon Elementary School designated for “colored people” prior to desegregation. The Hollywood neighborhood initially developed as a primarily white middle-class neighborhood, although today it is predominately a low-income African-American community.

The nearby Vollintine Evergreen Neighborhood to the west was developed before Hyde Park and the Hollywood neighborhood. This neighborhood offers historic and architectural character and is not affected with the some conflicting land uses as Hollywood; however there is a blend of small shops along some of the major traffic routes. This neighborhood has been active in seeking opportunities to battle some of the same quality of life issues as its Hollywood neighbors to the east.

The historical development of the study area provides many challenges and has impacted the quality of life for its residents including inadequate sized lots and incompatible or inappropriate land uses for a residential area. Opportunities for redevelopment exist with the assemblage of vacant or derelict properties.

# Midtown North Study Area



Prepared By:  
Memphis & Shelby County Division Of Planning & Development

This map is not a legal survey nor is it warranted as to its completeness or accuracy. The data contained herein is from a variety of digital sources which do not necessarily align as they should. The user is cautioned to check with Planning & Development before making any decision based on its content.

## ***II. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES***

The public planning process allowed neighborhood participants to clearly identify the goals and objectives for the neighborhood plan. They are based on a series of workshops held in the spring/summer of 2007.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. Change image of community and work together as an all-inclusive organization building neighborhood pride.
  - a. Pursue partnerships with private and public entities.
  - b. Pursue grant opportunities (including but not limited to Strategic Community Investment Funds).
  - c. Tap into community resources and talent that include historical, art, and agricultural resources.
2. Provide a safe environment for community residents and businesses.
  - a. Investigate and identify opportunities to enhance public improvements along major corridors in the neighborhood including Hollywood, Chelsea, and Springdale Streets.
  - b. Keep neighborhood streets pedestrian friendly and safe.
  - c. Build leadership at street level to help fight crime and get people to know each other and look out for each other.
3. Attract and support business and development that meet the needs of the community, that encourage employment opportunities and provide livable wages.
  - a. Seek funding opportunities for façade improvements.
  - b. Attract a grocery store that provides the neighborhood with healthy choices and fresh meat and produce.
  - c. Encourage small business development.
  - d. Encourage opportunities for a community market.
4. Explore and encourage the addition of green spaces and better utilize our existing neighborhood parks.
  - a. Explore opportunities to extend the VECA green line into the neighborhood.
  - b. Explore opportunities to reclaim vacant land for community gardens.
  - c. Allow for the return of a more natural habitat to some areas in the neighborhood along the Cypress Creek area and provide a path linking to green line.
5. Ensure safe and affordable housing for all families and individuals in the neighborhood.



- a. Utilize resources and develop programs to rehabilitate housing before homes become abandoned or an eyesore.
- b. Encourage developers and landlords to invest in the neighborhood and attract responsible tenants and homeowners.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

During the first public meeting, the attendees identified neighborhood assets, challenges and opportunities. Comments from the participants are listed below:

### **Strengths and Assets**

#### Public Spaces

Hollywood Community Center

Hollywood Health Loop

Library

Shannon School

Hollywood Elementary School

Cypress Creek Middle School

Springdale Elementary School

Post Office

#### Open Spaces and Recreation

Gooch Park-pool

Water pumping station- potential green space

### **Greenspaces**

VECA Green line – would like to extend

Community Garden

Potential to expand V-Line

#### Retail, Businesses and Services

Hardware Store on Chelsea

Kings Grocery

Dry Cleaners along Chelsea

Tri-State Bank

Retail Shops on Chelsea east of Hollywood intersection

Vaughn's Furniture Store

Restaurant along Hollywood (serves breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Local business between University and Davis on Hollywood

Businesses at Hollywood and Chelsea

Employment opportunities off Mathews

Businesses at Hollywood and Jackson

Hollywood Head Start

#### Housing

New Apartments on Jackson

Rehabbed apartments at Peeres and Merton

Park Castle Sub-Division

People and Neighborhood

Senior's have lot to give to community

Proud People

People seen walking around neighborhood

Lots of Professional people living in neighborhood

Cemetery along Hollywood-rich in history

Checker Club

Shasta Central

Women's Center

Block Clubs

Neighbors

Lots of people

Rich in history

General Comments

Sidewalks and Streets are in good condition

Location-close to downtown/highway/zoo

Code Enforcement office

**Weaknesses and Challenges**

Housing

Housing stock needs improvement

Burned out homes need to be replaced

More safe housing

Low income housing program for homeownership

Predatory lending

Landlords

"Gate crashers"

Safety and Environment

Area needs a good cleanup

Cypress Creek

People need to be more involved in the community

Vacant lots, buildings, and some business are attracting  
negative behavior

Springdale/Chelsea intersection needs cleaning up

Need more of a Police presence on the local streets

Hollywood and Chelsea is not a safe or comfortable place to  
walk

Car Wash on Hollywood drug activity

Tupelo Apartments

Unsafe pedestrian crossings

No seating for bus stops

Need handicap accessibility on sidewalks

Economic Stability

Livable Wage

Encourage people to move back to the neighborhood

Need to encourage retail, businesses and services to open in neighborhood

Need a Corridor study of Hollywood

Bring back Mom and Pop shops in Hyde Park

### **Opportunities**

Buckman Labs – potential partner for cleaning up Gooch Park

Hollywood School Closing – Vo-Tech opportunity

Potential to assemble land along Cypress Creek and link with V-line

Business along Chelsea is in great location needs to built back up

Vacant Lots on Chelsea a potential business opportunity

Cypress creek, great potential if cleaned up, de-channelize to make more natural with paths

## **CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

In preparing the Midtown North neighborhood plan, information was gathered from the United States Census Bureau to establish a demographic assessment of the neighborhood. For the purpose of this analysis, data was collected from census tract 6, 7, 8, and 9 to focus on population, housing, and economic information. This statistical area represents the entire study area and at the request of the neighborhood the immediate surrounding area to the west as well as part of a larger area named Midtown North (See Map 2).

In the second section of the chapter, current zoning, land use, and environmental conditions in the study area will be discussed.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

#### **A. Population Trends and Conditions:**

Population in the Midtown North neighborhood has declined significantly in all four of the census tract that it represents. Between 1980 and 2000 there has been a 31% decrease in the overall population of the neighborhood. In contrast the county population has increased by 15% over the same time period.

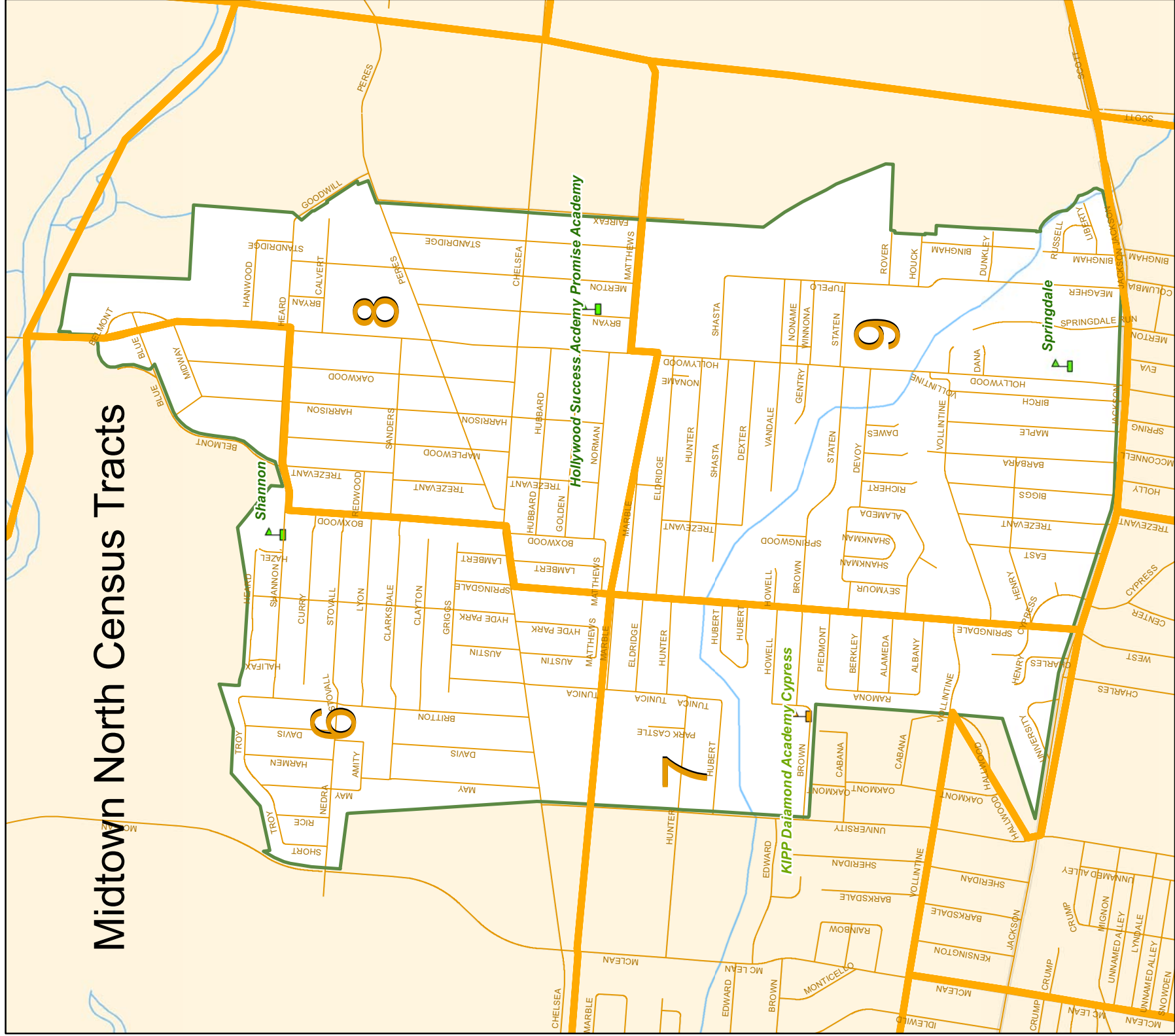
Table 1  
Total Population

Total Population	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000 % Change
Census Tract 6	4,756	3,915	2,938	-38%
Census Tract 7	6,697	6,447	5,641	-16%
Census Tract 8	5,304	4,315	3,438	-35%
Census Tract 9	6,025	4,697	3,694	-39%
<b>Midtown North Neighborhood</b>	<b>22,782</b>	<b>19,374</b>	<b>15,711</b>	<b>-31%</b>
Memphis	646,356	610,337	650,100	1%
Shelby County	777,113	826,330	897,472	15%

#### **Racial Composition:**

In the chart below the racial composition of the neighborhood indicates that 94% of the population is African-American. A further breakdown in Table 2 separates the racial mix by census tract and compares the percentages to the City and County. Census tract 7 shows a slightly more racially diverse population with approximately 11% Caucasian and 2% representing other ethnic groups. The Hispanic community is represented in only 0.6% percent of the neighborhood population in comparison to 2.97% of the city's population.

# Midtown North Census Tracts



Prepared By:  
Memphis & Shelby County Division Of Planning & Development

This map is not a legal survey nor is it warranted as to its completeness or accuracy. The data contained herein is from a variety of digital sources which do not necessarily align as they should. The user is cautioned to check with Planning & Development before making any decision based on its content.

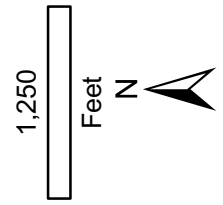
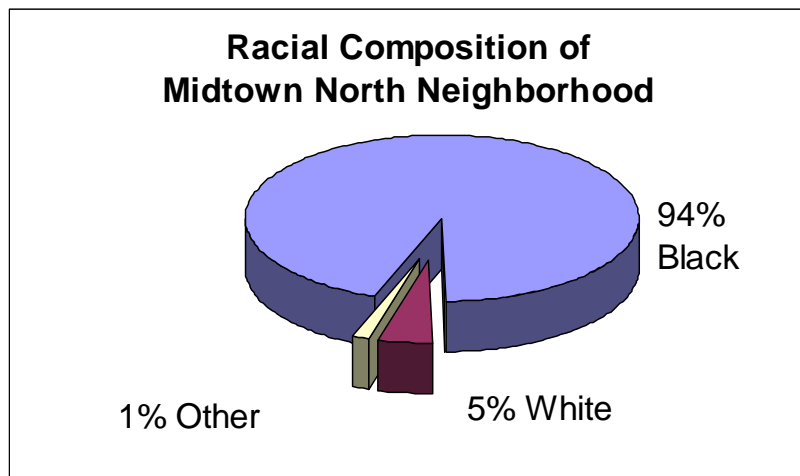


Chart 1

Table 2  
Racial Composition

Racial Composition	Black	White	Other	Hispanic
Census Tract 6	98.67%	0.68%	0.65%	0.14%
Census Tract 7	86.69%	11.15%	2.16%	0.66%
Census Tract 8	98.46%	0.58%	0.96%	0.70%
Census Tract 9	98.02%	1.33%	0.65%	0.79%
<b>Midtown North Neighborhood</b>	<b>94.17%</b>	<b>4.57%</b>	<b>1.26%</b>	<b>0.60%</b>
Memphis	61.89%	35.17%	2.94%	2.97%
Shelby County	48.99%	48.11%	2.90%	2.60%

Age Groups:

There has been a significant decrease in the percentage of children living in the study area. Although the overall population has dropped 31% as stated earlier, a reduction of children and people between the ages 18 and 24 years old is striking. The decrease is less significant in the older age groups. This might indicate that those leaving the neighborhood are mostly young families with children.

Table 3  
Age of Population

Age of Population	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000 % Change
Under 18	7,610	5,579	4,471	-41.2%
18-24 Years	3,430	2,304	1,606	-53.2%
25-44	5,219	5,374	4,051	-22.4%
45-64	4,053	3,513	3,268	-19.4%
65 Years and over	2,470	2,604	2,315	-6.3%

To examine the trend further the four census tracts representing the neighborhood have always been comparable to the median age of city and county. In general the median age has increased with each census; this trend is expected to continue as life expectancy increases. However in 1990, census tracts 6 and 9 have a higher median age in comparison to other census tracts in the neighborhood as well as the city and county.

Table 4  
Median Age

Median Age	1980	1990	2000
Census Tract 6	28.4	32.8	38.4
Census Tract 7	26.6	29.7	31.1
Census Tract 8	23.2	29.2	31.9
Census Tract 9	25.3	31.8	37.1
Memphis	28.3	31.5	31.9
Shelby County	27.9	31.3	32.9

Persons per Household:

The average number of persons per household for the neighborhood has also decreased steadily from 1980. This trend is also reflected city and county wide. What is interesting to note is that the neighborhood in 1980 had a significant higher person per household amount than the city or county, by 2000 the neighborhood now has fewer persons per household than the county and only slightly higher than the city.

Table 5  
Persons per Household

Persons Per Household	1980	1990	2000
<b>Midtown North Neighborhood</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.58</b>
Memphis	2.75	2.59	2.52
Shelby County	2.81	2.65	2.60

Educational Attainment:

Table 6 compares the percentage of High School graduates of persons 25 years and over between 1980 and 2000. The Midtown North Neighborhood has not only increased the percentage of those graduating with a high school diploma but has also seen an increase in the percentage of college graduates with a Bachelors Degree or higher. In comparison to the City and County, the neighborhood is significantly lower in the percentage of both high school and college graduates.

Table 6  
Educational Attainment

High School Graduates (person 25 years or Over)	1980	1990	2000
<b>Midtown North Neighborhood</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>58%</b>
City of Memphis	63%	70%	82%
Shelby County	66%	75%	86%
College Graduates* (person 25 years or Over)			
<b>Midtown North Neighborhood</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
City of Memphis	15%	18%	27%
Shelby County	16%	21%	27%

\*College Graduate = Bachelors Degree or higher

B. Housing Trends:

Table 7 examines the rate of Homeownership among residents in the Midtown North Neighborhood. The percentage of home ownership has dropped only slightly for the neighborhood since 1980; over 52% of homes are owner occupied. That is

slightly less than the City (56%) but significantly lower than the County at (63%). A reduction in the number of total housing units in the neighborhood suggests units have been lost to decay and neglect, or have been demolished by City Code Enforcement over the years. Approximately 91% of all housing units are occupied and that is only slightly less than City and County percentages of 92% and 93% respectively.

Table 7  
Housing Occupancy

Midtown North Neighborhood	1980	1990	2000
Number of Housing Units	7,625	7,191	6,677
Occupied	7,095	6,723	6,062
Owner Occupied	3,746	3,555	3,157
Percent Occupied	93.0%	93.5%	90.8%
Percent Owner Occupied	52.8%	52.9%	52.1%
City	1980	1990	2000
Number of Housing Units	244,470	248,573	271,552
Occupied	230,629	229,829	250,721
Owner Occupied	129,662	126,749	139,985
Percent Occupied	94.3%	92.5%	92.3%
Percent Owner Occupied	56.2%	55.1%	55.8%
Shelby County	1980	1990	2000
Number of Housing Units	286,381	327,796	362,954
Occupied	269,393	303,571	338,366
Owner Occupied	158,171	180,490	213,360
Percent Occupied	94.1%	92.6%	93.2%
Percent Owner Occupied	58.7%	59.5%	63.1%

### Housing Stock:

The age of housing stock is shown in Table 8 below. 61% of the total housing structures were built prior to 1960. The largest building boom occurred after World War II between 1940 and 1959. The new housing boom continued with 18% of all structures being built in the 1960's. Each decade since the 1960's has shown a steady decrease in structures being built. Most if not all homes built between 1980 and 2000 were likely to be built as replacement housing or infill development.

Table 8  
Age of Housing Stock

Year Built	Total Housing Structures	Percent of Housing Structures
1939 or Before	866	14%
1940-1959	2817	47%
1960-1969	1110	18%
1970-1979	785	13%
1980-1989	265	4%
1990-2000	187	3%

### C. Economic Trends and Conditions:

The table below shows the median household income by census tract as it occurred between 1980 and 2000. Census tracts 6, 7, 8, and 9 all represent the Midtown North Neighborhood. Median household income is significantly higher in the City and County when compared to all tracts in the study area. This is consistent throughout the twenty year period.



Table 9  
Median Income

Median Income	1980	1990	2000
Census Tract 6	\$6,563	\$10,131	\$16,703
Census Tract 7	\$11,642	\$15,140	\$22,554
Census Tract 8	\$ 7,632	\$12,676	\$15,295
Census Tract 9	\$ 9,375	\$13,608	\$17,080
City of Memphis	\$14,039	\$22,674	\$32,285
Shelby County	\$15,289	\$27,132	\$39,593

#### Poverty Trends:

The percentage of families living in poverty is higher in the census tracts representing the Midtown North neighborhood than in the City or County. The census tract with the lowest percentage of families living in poverty is census tract 7 with 31.5% and the highest rate at 45.7% is in census tract 8. These rates are extremely high in comparison to the City (17.2%) and County (12.9%). Throughout the twenty year span the neighborhood has had an excessive poverty rate for families.

Table 10  
Families Living in Poverty

Families Living in Poverty	1980	1990	2000
Census Tract 6	39.6%	43.9%	32.4%
Census Tract 7	22.2%	28.8%	31.5%
Census Tract 8	41.4%	39.9%	45.7%
Census Tract 9	33.0%	27.2%	33.9%
City of Memphis	17.1%	18.7%	17.2%
Shelby County	15.3%	14.7%	12.9%

Poverty thresholds are determined by a two-dimensional matrix that consists of family size and number of persons under the age of 18 years in the family. The poverty level based on this matrix as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, for a four person household (on the assumption of two adults and two children) in 2000 was calculated as \$16,895 as a yearly household income.

#### Labor Force Status:

In Table 11 unemployment rates and the number of persons in the civilian labor force are displayed for the study area and the City and County. The labor force is defined as those persons over sixteen years of age, employed or actively looking for employment.

The unemployment rate has dropped significantly in the Midtown North Neighborhood since 1990 when at the time the unemployment rate was 17.8%. It has since dropped down to 11.3%, but still remaining higher than the City (8.6%) or County (6.8%). The unemployment rate for the City and County has remained relatively stable over the past twenty years without much fluctuation.

The participation rate of persons in the civilian labor force has dropped in the last ten years from 56.7% to 48.7% in the neighborhood, while remaining stable in both the City and County.

Table 11  
Labor Force

Midtown North	1980	1990	2000
Persons in Civilian Labor Force	8,825	8,199	5,751
Participation Rate	54.4%	56.7%	48.7%
Percent of Unemployed Persons	14.3%	17.8%	11.3%
City of Memphis	1980	1990	2000
Persons in Civilian Labor Force	294,178	292,819	306,442
Participation Rate	60.9%	63.2%	62.8%
Percent of Unemployed Persons	8.5%	8.8%	8.6%
Shelby County	1980	1990	2000
Persons in Civilian Labor Force	349,684	406,434	438,150
Participation Rate	60.7%	65.2%	65.3%
Percent of Unemployed Persons	7.8%	7.3%	6.8%

## LAND USE ANALYSIS

### A. Existing Zoning

There are several incompatible land uses currently existing in the neighborhood such as the location of industrial activity along North Hollywood Street adjacent to residential properties. Most of the neighborhood is zoned either single family residential (R-S6) or duplex residential (R-D).

Most of the commercial activity takes place along North Hollywood Street with the main commercial node being at Hollywood and Chelsea and zoned Highway Commercial (H-C). North Hollywood Street includes a mix of light industrial uses, various commercial uses and underutilized accessory lots, and vacant lots. This area is zoned either Highway Commercial or Light Industrial (I-L). Most of these businesses are poorly landscaped and appear not to be well maintained. Several businesses on Hollywood have loitering activity taking place on the premises and drug dealing appears to be taking place in plain view from the street. The blighted commercial strip does not encourage passerby's using this as a route into the city to visit any of the commercial establishments.

Other commercial activity takes place along major roads in the neighborhood including Chelsea, Jackson and Springdale streets. These commercial businesses are zoned for Highway Commercial or Local Commercial (C-L) except for the businesses on the western side of Springdale Street that are located in the R-S6 district. There are also some mom and pop shops sprinkled throughout the neighborhood that are still in use and have been rezoned to C-L during a previous rezoning of the North Memphis Planning District.

There are several problems with the current zoning in the study area as indicated below:

- The west side of Springdale Street between Brown and Howell is zoned single-family residential and makes several vacant commercial properties and some viable businesses non-conforming.

- The vacant lot adjacent to King's grocery on Springdale Street is zoned Multi-Dwelling Residential (R-MM) this vacant lot has the potential to provide expansion of the existing grocery or provide parking for the nearby businesses.
- The Highway Commercial zone found along Hollywood and Chelsea streets allow uses that may be too intensive for the surrounding neighborhood.

#### B. Land Use Survey

A detailed land use survey conducted by Rhodes College Students shows the results of the survey and the current zoning for the neighborhood. Table 12 indicates that residential is the primary land use comprising approximately 62% of the total land in the study area. Single family dwellings are the primary use followed by two-family and then multi-family residential. Interestingly, the second largest land use type after residential is the Other/Accessory category with 20% of the land being underutilized as a vacant lot, accessory lot or yard, greenspace (does not include park land) and parking. Most of the identified parking areas are an accessory use to neighborhood churches and are not commercial parking lots.

Approximately 6% of the total land is comprised of institutional uses including three public schools, one charter school, a community center and library, the health loop and a Post Office. Commercial uses comprise approximately 4% of the total land use but almost 1/8 of land with commercial businesses are now vacant. Industrial businesses accounted for 9% of total land use.

Table 12  
Existing Land Use  
Midtown North Neighborhood

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of Total
<b><i>Residential</i></b>		
Single Family	485	52.4
Two-Family	44	4.8
Multi-Family	40	4.4
<b><i>Total Residential</i></b>	<b>569</b>	<b>61.5</b>
<b><i>Institutional</i></b>		
Church	12	1.4
Public Building	42	4.6
<b><i>Total Institutional</i></b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b><i>Business</i></b>		
Commercial	30	3.2
Vacant Commercial	6	0.6
Industrial	80	8.7
Vacant Industrial	3	0.3
<b><i>Total Business</i></b>	<b>119</b>	<b>12.9</b>
<b><i>Other/Accessory</i></b>		
Parking	11	1.2
Accessory Yard	18	1.9
Vacant Lot	132	14.2
Accessory Lot	1	0.2
Other Greenspace	21	2.2
<b><i>Other Total</i></b>	<b>183</b>	<b>79.7</b>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>926</b>	<b>100</b>

### C. Survey of Existing Building Conditions and Lots

The physical condition of buildings are noted within the context of the land use survey. Structures were ranked by students of Rhodes College as either being viewed as not a problem, deteriorating, deteriorated, or were an extreme hazard. Buildings that are an extreme hazard are not only a problem to those residents living inside them but also to the surrounding neighbors. Approximately 86% of all structures in the survey area have been designated as being in good condition, with 11% showing some deterioration and 3% being classified as deteriorated or in hazardous condition.

Table 13  
Condition of Buildings

	Good	Deteriorating	Deteriorated	Hazardous
Number of Parcels	3,378	421	87	39
Percent of Parcels	86.1	10.7	2.2	1.0
Total housing structures	3,196	392	80	34
Percent of Housing Structures	86.3	10.6	2.2	0.9



Example of deteriorating condition.



Example of hazardous condition, unsecure building.

The table below shows that almost 10% of all lots in the neighborhood have either weeds and overgrown grass exceeding 12 inches, a collection of debris, or a combination of the two. Approximately 55% of all vacant lots need either mowing or removal of litter. Businesses in the area are also not immune to the problem where 7.8% on their lots have a combination of weeds and debris.

Table 14  
Condition of Lots

	Good	Weeds	Debris	Weeds & Debris
Number of Parcels	4,286	389	53	59
Percent of Parcels	89.5	8.1	1.1	1.2
Total Businesses	160	8	3	14
Percent of Businesses	88.9	4.4	1.7	7.8
Vacant Lots	386	170	49	104
Percent of Vacant Lots	54.4	24.0	6.9	14.7

## IV. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

### SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

#### A. Pedestrian Safety:

Site visits to the neighborhood indicate that there is a fair amount of pedestrian activity throughout the day. Concerns have been raised by residents that pedestrian crossings along N. Hollywood and Springdale Street are not very visible or are non-existent in key crossing areas.

The safety of school age children is a major concern as there does not appear to be a safe designated walking route to the neighborhood schools. The intersection at Howell and Springdale streets is a key crossing area for students who attend Cypress Middle School. The crosswalk is not as visible as it could be to motorists and the crosswalk does not have a school crossing guard.

A safe route to school grant was submitted in the Spring of 2007 for Springdale Elementary School located off N. Hollywood Street. The grant application put an emphasis on infrastructure improvements along Hollywood that would create a pedestrian bridge over Cypress Creek. The grant application was recently not selected for funding but improvements to the area still need to be pursued.

Other areas of concern include poorly marked crosswalks near key activity centers such as the Hollywood Community Center that also includes a branch of the public library and the Health Loop.

Table 15  
Vehicles per Household

Census tract	Total housing units	Percent Occupied Housing Units with			
		no vehicles available	1 vehicle available	2 vehicles available	3 vehicles available
6	1,290	26.4	49.6	17.4	6.6
7	2,551	19.7	49.6	23.3	7.4
8	1,263	33.2	43.8	19.1	3.9
9	1,528	32.0	43.7	18.7	5.6



Missing crosswalk at intersection N. Hollywood Street sidewalk Hollywood & Peres near community crossing Cypress Creek center.

The conditions of sidewalks in the neighborhood are substandard in most areas. In the City of Memphis, adjacent property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalks. Signs of neglect such as cracked and weeded sidewalks can be seen throughout the neighborhood. The City will need to address sidewalks that are not ADA compliant. Obstructions such as fire hydrants and utility poles placed in the path of

pedestrians present accessibility problems to people in wheel chairs. Tip downs at curbs also need to be brought into ADA compliance in some areas throughout the neighborhood



West side of Springdale Springdale St. near Cypress Middle School northbound. Fire hydrant crossing. and utility pole create obstruction.

### ***B. Traffic Circulation***

Major roads in the study area include Jackson, Chelsea, and N. Hollywood Street. According to recent traffic counts, the total volumes of traffic has remained fairly constant over the past three years. Roads in the study area do not exceed capacity levels. Residents have expressed concern about speeds along Hollywood although no formal study has been done to determine if the concerns are valid.

Because of the sizeable amount of pedestrian activity and traffic along Hollywood and the recent re-pavement of the street, traffic calming measures that provide pedestrians with more security such as pedestrian refuges or curb extensions at

major pedestrian crossings need to be explored and implemented.

### ***C. Environmental Hazards***

Problems with trash and litter are common throughout the neighborhood with 10% of parcels showing some type of problem with overgrown vegetation or litter. Vacant lots and abandoned buildings are a major contributor to the problem. The abandoned Tupelo Apartments property was one of the worst examples of illegal dumping but is being razed by the City.



On site junk storage in the neighborhood.

Heavily polluted areas such as Cypress Creek and the Wolf River are two waterways that residents have not been able to enjoy the natural habitat due to contamination. Industrial pollution over the years has severely impacted the safety of these waterways. The North Hollywood Dump was on the



National Priority Superfund list; the dump is located on a 70 acre site along the Wolf River. The site has been fenced off in order to limit access to the river from the neighborhood. Pesticide-related compounds and heavy metals have been detected on the site beginning in the early 1980's. Contamination was found in drums that were removed from the site. By the mid 1990's capping and grading of the landfill was completed and the site was removed from the National Priority List. Long term monitoring of groundwater, surface water, and fish near and at the site continues to this day. It is not clear if this site could someday be opened for some public use.

Cypress Creek is a concrete channel that travels across the neighborhood south of Chelsea Avenue and eventually carries storm water runoff into the Wolf River. To improve drainage and control flooding, a concrete liner was installed and the creek channel was straightened in the mid 1960's. During the construction of the liner, some sediment from the bottom of the creek was used to fill in low spots along the bank of the creek. Prior to 1963, industries in or near the study area, most notably Velsicol Chemical Company had discharged wastewater into Cypress Creek. In 2005, the Tennessee Department of Health investigated the possibility of contamination along the creek and identified pesticide and chemical contamination in the soil. Velsicol has been working on remediating the problem on residential properties where concentrations of chemicals were determined unsafe. Once those properties are mitigated Velsicol will then begin the removal of contaminated soil along non-residential areas.



Cypress Creek



Cypress Creek near Cypress Middle School

#### ***D. Illegal activity:***

Crime activity was a common subject at several neighborhood meetings. The most frequent complaint with neighborhood residents and business owners alike is in regard to the illegal activity centered at the Hollywood Car Wash. During the day

and evening, people loitering around the area are visible from the street and it appears that drug transactions are taking place. Other problems include people setting up couches and chairs on vacant lots or loitering near the B-52 Market on Hollywood.

People have also expressed concern that there is not enough police presence in the neighborhood and citizens in the study area are afraid to call the police because they fear retribution from the criminals.



Activity at the Hollywood Car Wash



Drug house closed by  
Operation Blue Crush

### Economic Stability

Although there is much industrial activity in the area with high paying jobs at Velsico Chemical and Buckman Laboratories, these jobs no longer serve the residents living nearby. One of the issues preventing business to locate into the area is the lack of skilled labor with only 58% of persons over 25 years of age with a high school diploma.

A retail study conducted by the University of Memphis in 1998 for the North Memphis Planning District, indicated the need for miscellaneous repair services along with other services such as pest control services. Apparel & accessory stores, furniture and home furnishings, and shops selling used merchandise & antiques are also needed according to the study's research. The study also indicated a high abundance of beauty and barber shops, auto repair, and liquor stores in the North Memphis neighborhoods.

### Housing

As noted earlier approximately 14% of the housing stock is either deteriorating or worse. Due to City Code Enforcement budget constraints and manpower needs, the demolition of hazardous property is slow and the abandonment of these properties has had a severe impact in the neighborhood increasing blight. There have been recent efforts to rehab multi-family residences by new ownership include the Goodwill Village Apartments off Peres and Merton and the "A New Place Apartments" off of Howell Avenue. These efforts show m promise that similar projects could be done successfully in this neighborhood.

The demolition of deteriorated housing stock raises the concern of many residents. They would like to see homes fixed up and provide the community with a source of affordable housing rather than have them demolished. The demolition of the Tupelo Apartments off Tupelo Street also presents some new problems. Efforts will be needed to redevelop the site. The parcel is located in a Light-Industrial zone and a discussion will need to take place regarding how to encourage redevelopment of the site and what type of development to



attract. Rezoning of the site could possibly encourage the redevelopment for a more compatible use.



Houses in need of demolition



Dumping at Tupelo Apartments

## ***V. PLAN RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION***

As part of the public planning process, concerned area residents and stakeholders helped devise strategies to achieve the goals that were identified early on in the planning process. These strategies include recommendations for the neighborhood, local business owners, and various city/county departments.

**Building Community Pride: Change image of community and work together as an all-inclusive/diverse organization building neighborhood pride.**

- **Pursue partnerships with private and public entities.**
- **Tap into community resources and talent that include historical, art and agricultural resources.**

*Recommendation:* Develop a steering committee as part of the Mid-Town North Community Association to focus on creating a more positive image for the neighborhood. This includes hosting a series of workshops that help residents including school age children understand their history of the neighborhood and how it has developed over time. Other steering committees will be needed to organize neighborhood events and festivals as they are developed.

*Background:* A lack of neighborhood pride and involvement from business owners and residents has been a part in the overall general decline of conditions in the Midtown North neighborhood. The Rhodes Hollywood Springdale Partnership has spurred the development of the Mid-Town North Community Association. Those in the association recognize the need to change the neighborhoods image. The community

association has already begun by expanding the boundaries they serve to include the area as far west as North Watkins Street and as far north as James Road. Along with being more inclusive with the surrounding neighborhoods, they have changed their name and want to be known as Mid-Town North.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop neighborhood history through oral histories, videos and photos. Focus should be placed on the people, business owners and the ethnic origins of the neighborhood.
- Make physical improvements to the Hollywood and Chelsea intersection making the intersection a “Gateway” to the community. “Come Home to Hollywood” could be the theme to encourage revitalization and build pride.
- Establish a venue for arts and history along with a place to hear local gospel and blues musicians as part of the revitalization.
- Host a street festival with sponsorship from local corporations to participate in a sustained effort.

*Responsibility:* Midtown North Community Association will be responsible for the implementation of this recommendation.

**Community Safety: Provide a safe environment for community residents and businesses.**

- **Investigate and identify opportunities to enhance public improvements along major corridors in the neighborhood including**

**Hollywood, Jackson, Chelsea, and Springdale Streets.**

- **Keep neighborhood streets pedestrian/bike friendly and safe.**
- **Build leadership at street level to get people to know each other and look out for each other.**

*Recommendation:* Educate, encourage, and develop a traffic management program and adopt a policy that will allow neighborhoods and the City to work together to address the needs for pedestrian and other multi-modal transportation safety. Develop a traffic calming toolbox that will employ various forms of traffic calming and pedestrian safety devices in lieu of the current program that institutes speed humps as the means to slow traffic in neighborhoods. Traffic calming features such as curb extensions, pedestrian refuges, and higher visibility crosswalks would be ideal. Crosswalks at major intersections can be created using paving blocks, contrasting color concrete or zebra striping to highlight key crossing areas. The installation of Driver Feedback Signs could tie in with a Safe Routes To School grant application.

*Background:* The Midtown North Neighborhood has the potential to be a pilot project for implementing a city wide traffic management program. Pedestrian activity centers such as the Hollywood Community Center, school crossing areas, and commercial nodes at Chelsea and Hollywood offer an opportunity to provide a safer environment for pedestrians utilizing these social centers. Integrating traffic calming devices can also greatly enhance neighborhood beautification

and streetscape by providing additional greenspace and street trees. Grass medians along Jackson Avenue in the Rhodes College area have made a dramatic difference in the city streetscape of that area.

*Implementation Strategies:*

- Create dialogue with City Engineer to review traffic concerns near schools, public centers, and shops. Do a traffic study for major roads and identify where key pedestrian crossings should be located.
- Work with traffic engineers to design/develop “Stop for Pedestrian” crossing signs and utilize other measures such as driver feedback signs near schools.
- Host workshops on pedestrian and bike safety including what to do in dangerous situations (i.e. unleashed dogs).

*Responsibility:* City Engineering Office, City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development, Memphis City Schools, and Mid-Town North Community Association will be responsible for this program.

*Recommendation:* Provide workshops between the neighborhood residents and business owners with the City Police Department to educate how the neighborhood can play a role and partner with the City Police to deter crime. Also, provide workshops between the neighborhood residents and business owners with the City/County Code Enforcement, Fire and Health Departments to educate the importance of maintaining a safe neighborhood and how to report unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

*Background:* Discussions with members of the community indicated a fear of reporting crime to the Police because of retaliation from the accused. Residents claim that there has been incidents in the past where calling the police has put them in a situation where they become harassed by the criminals. Citizens believe they are being identified even when they choose not to be through caller identification. They are unaware of how to make an anonymous phone call to the police.

*Implementation Strategies:*

- Encourage residents to become Street Leaders to help organize involvement on a street by street basis.
- Encourage business owners to become facility leaders to help organize businesses.

*Responsibility:* Mid-Town North Community Association, Memphis Police Department, Memphis Fire Department, Shelby County Health Department, Shelby County Code Enforcement, and City of Memphis Code Enforcement will be responsible for the implementation of this recommendation.

**Business and Economic Development: Attract and support business and development that meet the needs of the community, that encourage employment opportunities and provide livable wages.**

- **Seek grant opportunities for façade improvements.**
- **Attract a grocery store that provides the neighborhood with healthy choices and fresh meat and produce.**

- **Encourage small business development.**
- **Encourage opportunities for a community market.**
- **Eliminate problems associated with incongruous businesses.**

*Recommendation:* Develop a strong working relationship with local church leaders, business owners, community organizations and city departments to foster a Business Development Committee that will provide resources, develop business portfolios, and business plans. Once a plan is developed, the committee needs to work with a local non-profit organization to apply for Strategic Community Investment Funds that will target neighborhood, economic, and community development projects or programs.

*Background:* Businesses in the area are mostly locally owned, with a few franchise businesses such as Walgreens, Mapco, Church's Chicken, and Kentucky Fried Chicken serving the neighborhood. Most of the local businesses have been located in the neighborhood for a long period of time, some have had a turnover in ownership such as Big Jet Supermarket. The Retail Study performed by the University of Memphis indicates that there is definitely a need for more retail to serve the neighborhood and surrounding area.

*Implementation Strategies:*

- Develop a working relationship with local colleges and universities that will foster and educate local businesses and entrepreneurs in how to develop a sound business plan.

- Develop a community food/grocery co-op that provides healthy alternatives and is run by the community business and residents. Encourage volunteer time to run store.
- Invite local developers to meet with residents to learn neighborhood needs.

*Responsibility:* Local business owners and the Mid-Town North Community Association City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development, local churches, colleges and universities will be responsible for implementation of these recommendations and strategies.

*Recommendation:* Conduct a parking survey for the commercial node at Hollywood and Chelsea and examine configuration for on street parking in the area. Possible parking opportunities may also present themselves in vacant or underutilized land in the area.

*Background:* Business owners have suggested that there is a parking issue that needs to be addressed in order for this commercial node to thrive. Businesses will not move into northwest corner of Hollywood and Chelsea because there is a lack of available parking in front or behind the building.

*Responsibility:* Local business owners and the Mid-Town North Community Association City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, Memphis Engineering Department will be responsible for implementation of these recommendations and strategies.

*Recommendation:* Conduct a commercial corridor study of N. Hollywood Street between Chelsea and Winnona streets. The study should look at street enhancements and façade improvements to existing businesses. Consider making the intersection of Chelsea and Hollywood a gateway into the community.

*Background:* Abandoned properties along N. Hollywood and lack of adequate landscaping has made the street unattractive to those passing through the neighborhood from other parts of the City. N. Hollywood Street carries a significant amount of traffic on a daily basis that stems from accessibility onto Interstate 240.

*Responsibility:* City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development, local business owners and the Mid-Town North Community Association will be responsible for implementation of these recommendations and strategies.

*Recommendation:* Once the Unified Development Code has been formally adopted a review of the zoning of commercial property along N. Hollywood Street and Chelsea Avenue needs to be revisited.

*Recommendation:* Change zoning of commercial area along Springdale Street that is currently zoned Single-Family Residential (between Brown and Howell Avenue) to be more conducive with the existing land use.

*Background:* The drafting of the Unified Development Code is still undergoing the public process while this document was being written. Proposed new zoning codes may encourage

commercial development in the area that will benefit the community and serve resident's needs.

*Responsibility:* Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development, local business owners and the Mid-Town North Community Association will be responsible for implementation of these recommendations and strategies.

**Parks and Green Space: Explore and encourage the addition of green spaces and better utilize our existing neighborhood parks.**

- **Explore opportunities to extend the V & E Green line into the neighborhood.**
- **Explore opportunities to reclaim vacant land for community gardens.**
- **Increase community and recreation services for the elderly and youth.**

*Recommendation:* Formalize an open space committee that will focus on working closely with the City Park Services Division, Shelby County Health Department, and local non-profits geared toward recreation and encouraging health and fitness in the community.

*Background:* The Midtown North neighborhood is located in a unique area of the city that can take advantage of an abandoned railroad line and the Wolf River Greenway and trail system. Unfortunately, some of the biggest challenges occur along the Wolf River where access has been limited in the past due to contamination. The former Hollywood Dump site along the river has since been cleaned-up and is no longer on the National Priority List. Fishing in the pond is still prohibited

and remains fenced in, with another study to monitor the extent of remaining contamination due in September 2010.

*Implementation Strategies:*

- Work with the Wolf River Conservancy to develop walking trails along the Wolf River in the study area.
- Educate and inform the public regarding the benefits of expanding the VECA line and creating other neighborhood walking trails.
- Develop an adopt-a-spot program and a good citizenship program.
- Co-op with businesses to reclaim vacant land for community gardens.

*Responsibility:* City Park Services Division, Shelby County Health Department, and Mid-Town North Community Association will be responsible for the implementation of this recommendation.

**Housing: Ensure safe and affordable housing for all families and individuals in the neighborhood.**

- **Utilize resources and develop programs to rehabilitate housing before homes become abandoned or an eyesore.**
- **Encourage developers and landlords to invest in the neighborhood and attract responsible tenants and homeowners.**
- **Develop senior housing opportunities for community style living.**

- **Pursue grant opportunities (including but not limited to Strategic Community Investment Funds).**

*Recommendation:* Develop a neighborhood housing committee that will host workshops regarding responsibilities of home ownership, financing opportunities, and encourage first time home buyers to invest in the neighborhood.

*Background:* The majority of the housing stock in the neighborhood was built prior to 1960 and requires the necessary maintenance of an older home. A high percentage of homes are renter occupied and some buildings have been neglected by the property owners to the point where they either need to be demolished or need major rehabilitation. The high incidence of poorly maintained homes has severely impacted the neighborhood and is one of the leading factors of blight.

*Implementation Strategies:*

- Provide learning workshops for financing from Memphis Area Legal Services, first time buyer programs and sweat equity programs.
- Develop a partnership with City of Memphis Housing and Community Development and invite them to participate in housing workshops.
- Educate public of all city/county programs available including purchases of tax lots on vacant property.
- Invite discussion with local housing developers.
- Work with Hyde Park CDC to develop housing opportunities.

- Provide an assistance program for elderly population facing a tax sale.

*Responsibility:* City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, City Code Enforcement, Hyde Park Community Housing Development Organization, and the Mid-Town North Community Association will be responsible for the implementation of this recommendation.